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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SERVICE TRENCH EXCAVATIONS

GOOSE PARK

THORNTON STEWARD

NORTH YORKSHIRE

SE 1771 8702

COUNTY / PARISH NO. 1087

FOR

A.HILL ESQ

WENSLEYDALE WILD BOAR

JUNE 2000

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**SERVICE TRENCH EXCAVATIONS
GOOSE PARK
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NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
APRIL 2000**

SUMMARY

The archaeological watching brief commenced on the 18th April 2000 and had concluded on 19th April 2000. During this period, two site inspections were made to observe and record those elements of the groundwork's that were likely to impact on archaeological remains. The watching brief was negative; some indication of the form and make up of the existing thoroughfare was noted.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2000 A. Hill Esq, Wensleydale Wild Boar, instructed Kevin John Cale, Archaeological Consultant to carry out an archaeological watching brief on groundwork's associated with the excavation of service trench Goose Park, Thornton Steward, North Yorkshire.

The proposed scheme was being undertaken in an area that had received no previous archaeological input. However, in 1996 archaeological investigations within the western extent of the village by Northern Archaeological Associates identified a hitherto unrecorded cemetery, dating to the Anglo-Scandinavian period (AD 690-900).

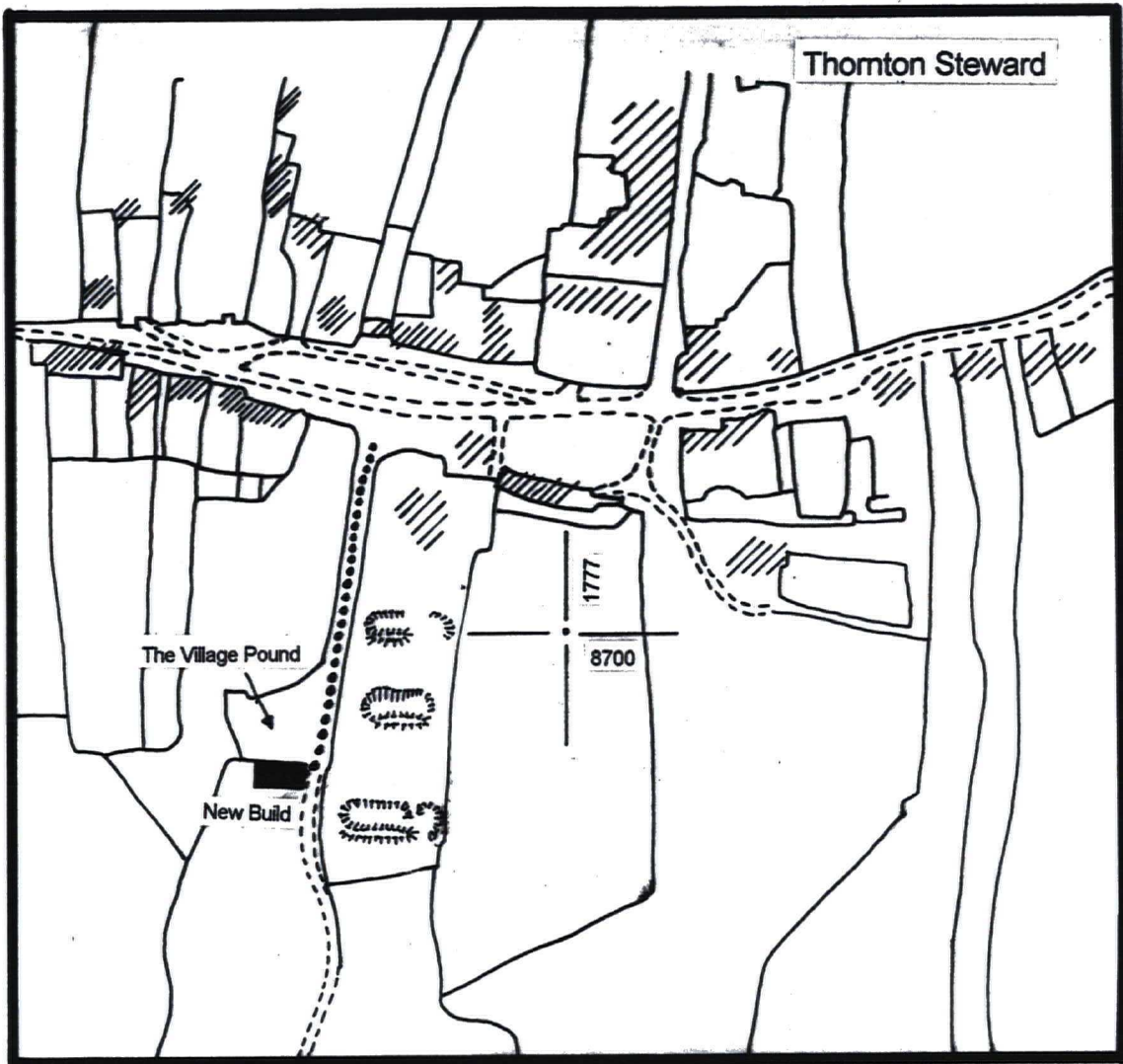
The Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire Council having consulted the available cartographic and photographic evidence suggested that there was a possibility that buried archaeological features and deposits would survive along the line of the proposed trench. It was likely that any such remains would be associated with settlement along the medieval street frontage of the village and or the surfaces of earlier thoroughfares.

PLANNING HISTORY

Prior to the commencement of groundwork's The County Archaeologist, Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire County Council informed the Client that it would be necessary for the groundwork's to be monitored as an Archaeological Watching

FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



Line of service trench

Not to Scale



Brief. Due to the close proximity of the works to the medieval settlement at Thornton Steward and to the complex of earthworks (NGR SE 1773 8700) that have been interpreted as medieval fishponds.

This condition would help to recover and record any archaeological remains and where at all possible to minimise the impact that these works may have on the archaeology.

STATUS

The site is located within the Conservation Area of Thornton Steward.

SITE LOCATION

The Village:

Thornton Steward is situated within the rural township of the same name in Lower Wensleydale. The small village is situated on the gently sloping valley side on the north bank of the River Ure.

The Study Area:

The study area consists of a rectilinear track that extends from the village green at N.G.R. SE 1772 8707 to a recently constructed agricultural building to the south south west at N.G.R. SE1770 8695 for a total distance of 150 metres, centred at 115m AOD.

The track presently affords access to the village's sewage plant and to a recently constructed agricultural steel framed building.

The track measures 5 metres wide and is surfaced in limestone hardcore. The gradient of the thoroughfare is gentle to moderate, sloping to the south. The northern half of the thoroughfare, which comprises the study area, is contained to the east and west by a mature hedge with intermittent post and wire fence.

Towards its northern extent, the track is contained within a shallow cutting, giving the appearance of a holloway. At its northern extent, the track forks and ascends a four metre high slope towards the main street through the village. Here the nature and date of the existing build on either side of the track are modern detached, domestic dwellings.

Towards its southern extent the track opens out onto a relatively level terrace. This area is known locally as the "The Village Pound".

A rapid site inspection determined that this site is presently waterlogged and heavily obscured with vegetation, evidence of cinder / ash and "fly tipping" was noted.

The greater length of the corridor passes through an area of grassland: pasture: unimproved. The ground level within the fields to the immediate east of the track are elevated approximately 1.10m above the surface of the track.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Unfortunately, this commission did not allow for a desk top study. The following details have been noted from the author's knowledge of the area.

No previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the study area.

A complex of three rectangular depressions have been previously identified in field OS No. 7296 to the immediate east of the track. These features appear to have been excavated into the natural fall of slope and then banked on the down slope side. The complex has been previously interpreted as "Fish Ponds".

An Anglo-Scandinavian Cemetery was identified in 1996 at a site to the west of the village at NGR SE 1698 8698. It has been reported that sixteen inhumations were exhumed together with a single cremation (ten males, five females). The burials were identified immediately below the topsoil. During this programme of work by Northern Archaeological Associates, a geophysical prospecting identified a sub circular feature within a larger rectangular enclosure situated within close proximity to the burial ground. Furthermore to the south of the site a track was recorded that was interpreted as being medieval in origin, although an earlier date for the thoroughfare is possible as two sherds of Roman pottery were found in association with the track.

Since the discovery of the Anglo-Scandinavian Cemetery site in 1996 a number of watching briefs have been maintained throughout the village, the outcome of which are not known.

THE NATURE OF THE WORKS

An archaeological watching brief is required during: -

- The machine excavation of a service trench from the Village Green to a recently constructed agricultural building. The trench will measure 150

PLATE 1 & 2



North / Central section of service trench, facing south.



Central / North section of service trench, facing north.

PLATE 3



Southern section of service trench, facing north north east.

metres in length, 0.95 metres wide and up to 0.85 metres in depth.

AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Before the commencement of groundwork's, it was considered that there was a potential for the preservation of buried archaeological remains across the site.

It was anticipated that should archaeology survive it would most likely comprise of a medieval / post medieval road surfaces and possible evidence of settlement along the street frontage towards the northern extent of the track.

The aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

- a. to record any finds, features or structures of archaeological interest and obtain information on the presence, extent, character, date and depth of these remains;
- b. to assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context.

It was agreed that the principal archaeologist would be present, on site, during the machine excavation and removal of any turf / overburden, topsoil and upper levels of the sub soil.

In the event that archaeology is exposed during, the above works it was agreed that adequate time is allowed for the archaeologist to record same.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological supervision of groundwork's at the above concluded on 19th April 2000, the following was noted.

Upon arrival on site, 18th April 2000 it was confirmed that the excavations had commenced from the northern extent of the track, a 50 metre length of the service trench had been excavated and was available for inspection. The remaining 100 metres of the track were excavated under archaeological supervision.

The watching brief was largely negative, with no significant archaeological features or deposits being identified. However, there follows a brief summary on the works.

The sub soil was identified along the entire length of the trench, however its matrix, inclusions and depth varied considerably along the trench. Towards the northern extent of the trench a layer of sandy clay (10YR4/3) was identified within the base of the excavation at 0.55m below existing ground levels. This layer had a moderate quantity of inclusions dominated by water worn pebbles. Within the centre/north of the trench the matrix had become shale like and was identified within 0.10m of the existing ground levels, no inclusions were identified. Towards the central area of the trench a sand like matrix surrounded glacial erratic boulders, these fragments of limestone measured up to 0.90 metres cubed. Towards the centre south the sub soil was characterised by coarse sands with a high gravel and limestone inclusion, here the sub soil was identified at 0.18m below the existing surface. Within the southern extent of the trench, the sub soil had reverted to sandy clay and was identified at 0.35m below the existing ground levels.

The undulating nature of the surface of the sub soil appears to have resulted from the natural deposition of glacial moraine and is not anthropogenic in origin.

Overlying the sub soil, a simple stratigraphy was identified. Within the northern extent of the trench, the existing ground levels appear to be the result of two principal deposits of made up ground, namely;

A 0.14m deep layer of medium brown (10YR3/1) sandy loam, containing a high quantity of inclusion of lime flecking, sandstone fragments (<0.25m in size) and water worn pebble. The layer has the overall appearance of construction / demolition debris. A small assemblage of artefacts was identified within this layer and these consisted of pottery, glass and metalwork all of which can be attributed to the late 19th century.

And a 0.12m deep deposit of cinder and ash (10YR2/4). This moist well-compacted layer contained a small quantity of clinker the nature of which appeared to be of a light industrial origin rather than domestic, possibly originating from a Smithy. The layer was identified towards the base of the excavation, sandwiched between the sub soil and the sandy loam deposit. The layer also contained a small assemblage of 19th century artefacts.

Within the central and southern area of the trench, it is apparent that the existing ground levels had been formed by hardcore surfacing and a sub base of limestone fragments. The sub base increased in depth towards the southern extent of the trench, up to 0.45m in depth, suggesting that the former ground levels sloped down at a more acute gradient. It is suspected that due to the volume of road construction material, identified within this section of the trench, these deposits can be attributed to a 20th century programme of civil engineering works.

It is likely that this can be attributed to Yorkshire Water Services and their efforts to improve HGV access to the Sewage Works down slope.

The watching brief generated a small assemblage of 19th century and modern artefacts. These were dominated by pottery sherds, but also included glass and metalwork. The artefacts were not recovered.

Kevin John Cale

June 2000